

# CULLMAN COUNTY

## Honorable Kim Chaney

Cullman County Courthouse  
500 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. SW  
Cullman, AL 35055  
(256) 775-4766



Robert Matthews  
William Sulzby, Jr.  
Sylvia Morris  
Martha Williams  
Janice Sweatman  
John Venegoni  
Charles Clemmons  
Sandra Rhodes  
Robert Palys  
Jack Collins  
Elaine Cole  
Hedi Walker  
Dan Williams  
Kenny Culpepper  
Donna Bryant

Tyler Roden  
Debbie Preston  
Neida Pepper  
Lisa Sharpton  
Dawn Trimble  
Terri Thomas  
Rick Mancer  
Judy Bonds  
Cheryl P. Black  
Irene Hardeman  
Susan Martin  
Brenda Howell  
Wiley Kitchens  
Dan Williams  
Karen Blackwood

Chris Van Dyke  
Candece Adkins  
Martha Thomas  
C. Wilson Blaylock  
Nancy C. Horton  
Janet Harris  
Nancy Holton  
Kathy Kilpatrick  
Vicki Hawsey  
Pat Spradlin  
Zeb Little  
Jeremy Oden  
Jackie Walker  
Jaren Daniel

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Illegal Drugs
2. Family resource center funding
3. Proper funding for State and local agencies and programs

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## Health - Children's (0 - 19)

**physical and mental well-being in the county.**

### Illegal Drugs Use

Policy Council Action Steps:

- discussion with faith based group about local residential program
- meet with local area mental health to discuss prevention funds and/programs
- meet with drug task force to identify ways to educate the community about signs of drug use

### STD's

Policy Council Action Steps:

- meet with Health Department to discuss education/prevention of STD
- drug task force agrees that STDs are a by-product of illegal drug use- community needs to be educated
- actual drugs and how they are used are taken as exhibit and displayed for education of the community

### Teenage pregnancy

Policy Council Action Steps:

- education and prevention programs utilized through school
- alternative schools include education program
- this issue has been adopted by the Cullman Co. Health coalition as a community need, school system not utilized "baby think it over" computerized babies that cry to educate youth

### Lack of residential mental health facilities for youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- recognized that state mental health needs to fund more residential programs for youth

- Bryce Adolescent needs to be better funded so waiting periods will be lessened
- local legislative delegation will be notified of this need.

## Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

### Child abuse and neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Develop position court liaison with local DHR
- DHR at a state level needs more funding for programs
- Funding for local CAC must be maintained

### Youth violence and bullying that is compounded by illegal alien problems

Policy Council Action Steps:

- JPOs and or Juvenile Judges meet with all SROs (school resource officer) quarterly to identify problems. Their funding needs to be maintained
- close working with school systems maintained
- judge Chaney may propose local legislation requiring illegal aliens charged with crimes to register with the sheriff and use registration fees to maintain database, defray health and education costs

### Sexual Assault

Policy Council Action Steps:

- developed educating and prevention program to be presented by local non profit corp.
- program is now presented to every school in the county
- child Advocacy Center is ready for forensic interviews and/or counseling of victims

### Lack of Juvenile Detention Space

Policy Council Action Steps:

- convinced county to include juvenile detention when building new jail
- helped fund (with court costs bill) new 10 bed short term detention facility
- new detention director welcomed to member of local children council

## Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

### High School Education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with high schools to reduce dropout rate
- maintain early warning truancy program to quickly address truancy
- school system encouraged to notify juvenile court ASAP so early intervention may take place

### School Funding

Policy Council Action Steps:

- state and local school boards need to be adequately funded
- legislature must understand that education must be priority

### Vocational Training

Policy Council Action Steps:

- obtained grant for vocational training component from VISTA
- work with local chamber of commerce to better identify local workforce needs
- partner with schools, local Jr. college and industry to maintain trained workforce

### **School Safety**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- meet with school resource officers and JPO to discuss school safety
- discuss school safety with boards of education utilize at risk moneys to develop program

### **Early Care and Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.**

#### **Youth mothers do not receive proper health care**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with health care providers and public health care to ensure prenatal care
- we are supporting the "Good Samaritan Health Clinic" local free medical clinic
- PSA prenatal care

#### **Early intervention for pre-k needed**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- more funding needed to identify and put in place more pre-k program

#### **Not enough adequate childcare**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- expense of childcare is difficult for low income families
- talk about cooperation between families to develop network of support

### **Economic Security**

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

#### **Availability of employment**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work posting temporary summer jobs on proposed website
- work with local chamber to identify employment options

#### **Assist with economic development**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- invite economic development director become more involved with CPC
- try to get funding for grant writer to assist in all areas

### **Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.**

#### **Single fathers need to be more involved with children**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- work with local non profit to develop and implement "fathers program"
- JPO and court supply potential candidates for "fathers program"
- work with DHR and DA to improve child support from non custodial parents

#### **Family Resource Center**

Policy Council Action Steps:

- applied for several grants to fund resource center
- identified need for family resource center identified as need last year

## Policy Recommendation

1. More funding for substance abuse prevention statewide
2. More regional residential programs for those committed to treatment, better enforcement of the laws by law enforcement.
3. Continued funding for school resource officers
4. State must identify and make accessible funding for family resource centers to all counties for local programs as SEED money
5. State address long term funding of all the agencies dealing with our children (i.e. DHR, DYS, MH)
6. Legislative and executive branch must find a way to change revenue generating policies of this state

## Accomplishments

1. Cullman County Children's Policy Council has established a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit corporation, "Cullman County Partnership for Children" to access grants and funding.
2. Cullman County Partnership for Children won grants for three VISTA volunteers:
  - a. The first position will focus on Mentoring. This position will seek out and train appropriate volunteers to mentor to local youth at schools. It is our plan to expand the program to work with delinquent and dependant children as well.
  - b. The second position will focus on vocations/jobs for youth. This position will work with schools, at risk youth, the Cullman Chamber of Commerce and local industry to identify local workforce needs. We will then attempt to match those needs with appropriate youth. It is our hope that our youth will receive training and job opportunities and our local industry will have a viable workforce from which to draw from.
  - c. The final position will focus on grant writing. This position will explore, identify and apply for any local, state or federal grants to support programs that may provide needed services for area youth.
3. New local Juvenile Detention Facility. Several years ago, the need for a local juvenile detention facility was identified. Since then, we have been working on that goal. This year Cullman County has opened a new "state of the art" 10 bed Juvenile Detention Facility. This new facility also provides new offices for Cullman Juvenile Probation.